The following claims are presented for examination:

1. (previously presented) A method comprising:

receiving a first plurality of protocol data units at a first input, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are en route to a first congestible node;

maintaining at a protocol-data-unit excisor a first queue for said first plurality of protocol data units;

receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and

selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a first metric of said first queue.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a second plurality of protocol data units at a second input, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are en route to a second congestible node;

maintaining at said protocol-data-unit excisor a second queue for said for said second plurality of protocol data units;

receiving at said protocol-data-unit excisor a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue; and

selectively dropping, at said protocol-data-unit excisor, one or more of said protocol data units based on a second metric of said second queue.

6. (previously presented) A protocol-data-unit excisor comprising:

a first input for receiving a first plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said first plurality of protocol data units are *en route* to a first congestible node;

a first queue for storing said first plurality of protocol data units;

a first receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said first congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said first queue; and

a processor for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said first queue.

7. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using back-pressure flow control.

8. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said indication is conveyed using the Pause frame procedure of IEEE 802.3.

9. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 wherein said protocol-data-unit excisor decides whether to drop a protocol data unit based on Random Early Detection.

10. (previously presented) The protocol-data-unit excisor of claim 6 further comprising:

a second input for receiving a second plurality of protocol data units, wherein all of said second plurality of protocol data units are en route to a second congestible node;

a second queue for storing said second plurality of protocol data units; and

a second receiver for receiving a flow control signal that indicates whether said second congestible node is ready to receive one or more of said protocol data units from said second queue;

wherein said processor is also for selectively dropping one or more of said protocol data units based on a metric of said second queue.